

Dear Friend,

Medicare is a critical program for America's seniors, but it is on the path to bankruptcy. Everyday, thousands of people are added to the Medicare rolls and there is near universal agreement that it must be reformed. Yet, some politicians are hoping you'll ignore the facts about Medicare.

Over the past decade, Medicare spending has increased 130 percent while the U.S. economy has only grown 17 percent, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. In 2010, total Medicare expenditures were \$523 billion, and conservative projections have expenditures reaching nearly \$1 trillion by 2021. In March, the Congressional Budget Office put out a report saying that if nothing is done, Medicare will go bankrupt in nine years. This means the program that nearly 50 million Americans rely on for health care services now won't be there for our children or grandchildren.

Exacerbating problems with Medicare is the fact that more and more doctors are refusing to see Medicare beneficiaries, primarily because Medicare under reimburses them for services. In fact, Medicare generally reimburses doctors at just 80 percent of what private insurers do. In a recent survey of 9,000 doctors by the American Medical Association, 17 percent restrict the number of Medicare patients in their practice. Of that amount, 31 percent are primary care physicians. With less doctors treating Medicare beneficiaries, this translates into reduced choice and longer wait times for our seniors to get the medical care they need.

I refuse to stand by and allow Medicare to go bankrupt, which jeopardizes not only current seniors' access to health care, but our children and grandchildren's as well. My colleagues and I in the House want to save Medicare for our seniors and for future generations. We passed a budget that includes reforms to Medicare that will do just that. Our reforms wouldn't change a thing for anyone in or near retirement. That means if you are 55 or older, you will continue to receive the exact same Medicare benefits that are available now.

In order to ensure Medicare is around for future beneficiaries, our plan reforms the program, making it similar to how Members of Congress and Federal employees receive health insurance. Beneficiaries would be able to choose from a number of Medicare-approved private health insurance plans for coverage and receive premium support from the federal government.

The premium support is similar to the popular Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D programs, which have come in under budget saving taxpayers billions of dollars. Our plan also guarantees coverage to anyone who qualifies for Medicare, including those with pre-existing conditions. This approach not only ensures choice, but competition between insurers to attract seniors to their products means increased quality and coverage. It also will help reduce costs for seniors and preserve Medicare for future generations.

The bottom line is that Medicare will go bankrupt without action. The status quo cannot be sustained. We cannot continue to ignore the problem. A "do nothing" solution is no solution at all. I remain confident that we can save this program and that America's brightest days are still ahead. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues, Republican and Democrat, to make 2011 the year where America comes roaring back.

I know this issue is important to you and as always I appreciate your feedback. To share your opinion now, please answer the following question:

Do you agree that Medicare must be reformed to ensure the program's solvency for future generations?

[Click here to take the survey](#) .

Sincerely,

Congressman Kevin McCarthy